

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**Third Annual Community Gardening Conference to be Hosted in
Hartford, on Saturday April 2, 2005
The Institute of Living, Commons Building, 200 Retreat Avenue**

This event brings together close to 150 gardeners from both the local community and from across the state who will have the opportunity to experience the richness of our capitol city's horticultural resources.

The event has been run for the past two years by a partnership of agricultural and community organizations from across the state, including: Knox Parks Foundation, University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, USDA Northeast Regional Sustainable Agriculture Research Education Program, New Haven Ecology Project, CT NOFA – Northeast Organic Farmer Association, Torrington Community Gardeners, the Inter-religious Eco-justice Network, the Hartford Food System, and the City of Bridgeport. All of these organizations generously contribute their staff time, resources, and connections and expertise to this most worthy cause.

The Conference will feature workshops on horticulture and gardening techniques, organizing and managing community gardens, and tours of area green projects. The emphasis of the program is building stronger communities, bolstering support for green initiatives, and improving skills that help make these efforts successful. These workshops attract community gardeners from across the state, volunteers, community organizers, non-profit and government employees, other individuals interested in creating greener communities. By making this learning opportunity as accessible as possible, we hope to increase both our attendance numbers and our inclusiveness as a gardening community.

By holding this conference in Hartford, we will be able to promote our city's horticultural beautification programs; our community gardens; our Rising Star and Pride Block Neighborhoods; and our community's burgeoning appreciation for the value of urban greening projects.

Community gardens are the sites of a unique combination of activities: food production, recreation, social and cultural exchange and the development of open space, community spirit, skills, and competence.